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United Nations

# Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

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**Official Records**
**Sixty-seventh Session**
**Supplement No. 35**

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# Report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

United Nations • New York, 2012

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## Letter of transmittal

[8 October 2012]

Mr. Secretary-General,

I have the honour to enclose herewith the report of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People for submission to the General Assembly in accordance with paragraph 2 of its resolution 66/14 of 30 November 2011.

The report covers the period from 7 October 2011 to 6 October 2012.

(*Signed*) Abdou Salam **Diallo**
Chair of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York

# Chapter I
# Introduction

1. The Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People was established by the General Assembly by its resolution 3376 (XXX) of 10 November 1975, with the task of recommending a programme designed to enable the Palestinian people to exercise its inalienable rights, as recognized by the Assembly in its resolution 3236 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974.

2. The recommendations made by the Committee in its first report to the General Assembly[1] were endorsed by the Assembly as a basis for the solution of the question of Palestine. In its subsequent reports,[2] the Committee has continued to stress that a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the question of Palestine, the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict, must be based on the relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as on the following essential principles: the withdrawal of Israel, the occupying Power, from the Palestinian territory occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and from the other occupied Arab territories; respect for the right of all States in the region to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized boundaries; and the recognition and exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. The recommendations of the Committee contained in its first report could not be implemented, and the Assembly has each year renewed the Committee's mandate and requested it to intensify efforts in pursuit of its objectives.

3. The Committee has consistently supported the objective of two States, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognized borders on the basis of the 1949 armistice lines, in accordance with relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). The Committee welcomed and supported the Quartet's Road Map and called upon the parties to implement it. In keeping with its mandate, the Committee has continued to work towards creating conditions for the successful conduct of the negotiations on a permanent settlement allowing the Palestinian people to realize its inalienable rights. The Committee has also promoted support and assistance by the international community to the Palestinian people.

4. The reporting period was characterized by the deadlocked political process and the deteriorating socioeconomic situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. There has been no breakthrough in efforts towards resuming direct Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, owing to Israel's consistent refusal to freeze its settlement activity and adhere to the long-standing terms of reference of the peace process. In the absence of credible negotiations, the Palestinian leadership continued its diplomatic initiatives to gain international recognition of Palestine as a State within the 1967 borders on the basis of international law and relevant United Nations resolutions. While Palestine's request for admission as a United Nations Member State, submitted on 23 September 2011, has been pending in the Security Council, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) admitted Palestine as a member State on 31 October 2011.

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[1] *Official Records of the General Assembly, Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 35* (A/31/35).

[2] Since the thirty-first session, the Committee has submitted annual reports to the General Assembly; all such reports have been issued as supplement No. 35 of the sessional documentation of the Assembly.

5. The situation in the Gaza Strip continued to be a source of serious concern, with high rates of poverty and unemployment. The continued blockade imposed by Israel, the occupying Power, forced 1.6 million Palestinians in Gaza, half of them children and two thirds of them refugees, to continue suffering from an acute shortage of basic goods and essential services. Reconstruction and rehabilitation continued to be hampered by the blockade. Israel continued to conduct air strikes and other military operations in and around Gaza, resulting in Palestinian casualties, including many civilians. Rocket and mortar fire by armed Palestinian groups into southern Israel also continued, endangering the lives of the Israeli population.

6. Israeli military raids and incursions in West Bank population centres continued, involving the killing and injuring of Palestinians, including children. At least 2,500 Palestinians, including women and children, were arrested during those operations. Many unarmed civilians were subjected to the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces during demonstrations against the occupation, resulting in many injuries. Israel continued to expand its illegal settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, attempted to retroactively "legalize" so-called outposts, created new settlements and approved thousands of new settlement units. The construction of the separation wall continued in defiance of the International Court of Justice advisory opinion (2004), resulting in further confiscation of Palestinian land and demolition of properties, further harming socioeconomic conditions and causing the displacement of more Palestinian families. The situation in Occupied East Jerusalem remained alarming, with continued land confiscations, house demolitions and evictions of Palestinian residents, and the transfer of more Israeli settlers into the City.

7. The Palestinian Authority steadily advanced its State-building programme on the ground, but it was challenged by a serious budget deficit as well as by restrictions and obstacles imposed by Israel on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which continued to prevent the normal movement of persons and goods, economic activity and sustained growth. In addition, a decrease in foreign aid and the failure of donor countries to fulfil their financial pledges contributed to the dire situation. As for Palestinian reconciliation, Fatah and Hamas reached an agreement in February 2012 to form a transitional Government as part of the process launched by their May 2011 agreement, but its implementation has been pending.

8. The activities of the Committee and its Bureau in the reporting period focused on the need for respect for the relevant United Nations resolutions and the urgency of resuming negotiations between the parties in the interest of salvaging the two-State solution and advancing the realization of a just, comprehensive and lasting peace. The Committee monitored the situation on the ground and the political developments, implemented its programme of international meetings and conferences, held consultations with representatives of Governments, national parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations, as well as civil society, and reached out to its partners worldwide using new communications media. The Committee reiterated its position of principle that a permanent settlement of the question of Palestine could be achieved only through ending the occupation that began in 1967, establishing a Palestinian State on the basis of the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just and agreed solution to the Palestine refugees issue on the basis of General Assembly resolution 194 (III).

9. The economic cost of the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territory was discussed at the annual seminar on assistance to the Palestinian people organized by the Committee in Cairo in February 2012. The seminar was followed in April by an international meeting in Geneva that focused on the question of Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel. The theme of another international meeting held in Paris in May addressed the role of youth and women in the peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine. It was followed in July by a regional meeting for Asia and the Pacific, at which the role of countries in the region in addressing the obstacles to the two-State solution was discussed.

# Chapter II
## Mandate of the Committee

10. On 30 November 2011, the General Assembly renewed the mandate of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People (see resolution 66/14), requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its programme of work (see resolution 66/15) and requested the continuation of the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat (see resolution 66/16). On the same date, the Assembly adopted resolution 66/17, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine".

# Chapter III
# Organization of work

## A. Membership and officers

11. During the reporting period, Ecuador joined the Committee as a new member and Saudi Arabia as an observer.

12. The Committee is composed of the following Member States: Afghanistan, Belarus, Cuba, Cyprus, Ecuador, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Namibia, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Pakistan, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of).

13. The observers at the Committee meetings are: Algeria, Bangladesh, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, Viet Nam and Yemen, as well as the African Union, the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Palestine.

14. At its 339th meeting, on 13 February 2012, the Committee re-elected Abdou Salam Diallo (Senegal) as Chair, Pedro Núñez Mosquera (Cuba) and Zahir Tanin (Afghanistan) as Vice-Chairs. Christopher Grima (Malta) was elected Rapporteur.

## B. Participation in the work of the Committee

15. As in previous years, the Committee reconfirmed that all United Nations Member States and observers wishing to participate in the work of the Committee were welcome to do so. In accordance with established practice, Palestine participated in the work of the Committee as an observer, attended all of its meetings and made observations and proposals for consideration by the Committee and its Bureau.

# Chapter IV
# Review of the situation relating to the question of Palestine

### Political developments

16. Despite a series of quiet and informal meetings between the parties, there has been no breakthrough in efforts towards resuming Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and negotiations, owing to Israel's consistent refusal to freeze its illegal settlement activities, which continued to deepen mistrust and raise tensions and to jeopardize the two-State solution. On the contrary, Israel has continued to create new settlements, attempted to retroactively "legalize" so-called outposts, and announced plans for the construction of thousands of new settlement units during the reporting period.

17. Palestine's application for admission to United Nations membership, submitted by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas on 23 September 2011, remains pending in the Security Council, since its Committee on the Admission of New Members was unable to make a unanimous recommendation to the Council, as reflected in its report of 11 November 2011. In his statement to the General Assembly on 27 September 2012, President Abbas said that Palestine had begun intensive consultations with various Member States and regional organizations aimed at having the Assembly adopt a resolution considering Palestine a non-Member State of the United Nations.

18. Meanwhile, the Palestinian leadership continued efforts to gain international recognition of Palestine as a State within the 1967 borders. On 31 October 2011, UNESCO admitted Palestine as a member State of the agency. The Israeli Government reacted to that development with punitive measures, including temporarily freezing the transfer of value-added tax and customs revenues that it collects on behalf of the Palestinian Authority pursuant to the Paris Protocol, and by announcing the accelerated construction of some 2,000 settlement units. On 29 June 2012, the UNESCO World Heritage Committee voted to add Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity and its pilgrimage route to the Heritage List.

19. During the reporting period, Iceland and Thailand announced that they recognized the State of Palestine, while several other States upgraded the status of the Palestinian delegation in their countries to that of an embassy or similar entity. According to the Negotiations Affairs Department of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to date some 130 States Members of the United Nations have recognized the State of Palestine.

### Settlements

20. During the reporting period, Israel, the occupying Power, continued and intensified its illegal settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics reported in August 2012 that, in 2011, the number of settlers in the 144 settlements in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, had been 536,932 (337,285 in the West Bank and 199,647 in East Jerusalem), reflecting an increase of almost 13,000 compared to 2010.

21. During the reporting period, the following plans were announced or approved by Israel: 119 housing units in the "Shilo" settlement (27 November 2011); 40 homes and a farm near "Efrat" (12 December); tenders for 348 units in "Beitar Illit" and 180 in "Givat Ze'ev" (18 December); the construction of 500 new units in

"Shilo" and the retroactive "legalization" of more than 200 units in "Shilo" and "Shvut Rachel" built without permits (22 February 2012); tenders for 180 units in "Givat Ze'ev" and 69 in "Katzrin" in the occupied Golan (4 April); 851 new units in several West Bank settlements (6 June); and 750 new housing units in "Ma'ale Adumim" (12 August).

22. In addition, on 31 December 2011, the Government of Israel announced that it would recognize the "Ramat Gilad" outpost established on private land of Palestinians from Kafr village, which would become part of the "Karnei Shomron" settlement. On 24 April 2012, the Government of Israel announced that it had granted legal status to three settlement outposts, "Bruchin", "Sansana" and "Rechelim". On 17 July, it was reported that the Israeli Defence Ministry had "legalized" the "Givat Salit" outpost by making it part of the nearby "Mehola" settlement.

23. In Occupied East Jerusalem, the following plans were announced or approved: construction of a new visitors' centre at the "City of David National Park" in Silwan (11 February); 11 new apartments in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (8 October); approximately 2,600 housing units for a new settlement "Givat Hamatos" (11 October); tenders for 749 housing units in "Har Homa" and 65 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (15 November); construction of a new Jewish enclave to be named "Maale David" in the heart of the Palestinian neighbourhood of Ras al-Amoud (7 December); tenders for 500 units in "Har Homa" (18 December); construction of 130 new settler units in East Jerusalem (28 December); three new tenders for 300 settlement housing units in Jerusalem (3 January 2012); 277 housing units in "Efrat" as part of a series of reprisals for Palestine's admission to UNESCO (11 January); the establishment of a new settlement "Kidmat Zion", with about 200 units on a plot of land purchased by United States of America millionaire Irving Moskowitz (2 April); tenders for 827 homes in "Har Homa" (4 April); construction of nine hotels in "Givat Hamatos" (1 May); 1,242 units in "Gilo" (10 May) and 180 units in "Armon HaNetziv" (26 June); tenders for 130 housing units in "Har Homa" and 41 in "Pisgat Ze'ev" (30 June); establishment of a military college on the Mount of Olives (2 July); and tenders for 130 housing units in "Har Homa" (16 August).

**Settler violence**

24. Settler-related violence in the West Bank and East Jerusalem continued to be a source of serious concern. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, at least 154 Palestinians were injured by Israeli settlers during the reporting period (as at 2 October). At least 39 Israeli settlers were injured by Palestinians during the same period. In 2012 (as at September), 13 Palestinians, including 8 children, have been injured in hit and run incidents involving Israeli settler vehicles. Inadequate law enforcement by Israel and lack of accountability continued to be the key factors underpinning the phenomenon of settler violence and deliberate provocations against the Palestinian civilian population, including acts against Palestinian children, families and farmers, homes, agricultural lands and orchards and desecration of Muslim and Christian holy sites.

**Jerusalem**

25. The Association for Civil Rights in Israel reported in May 2012 that 360,882 Palestinians comprised 38 per cent of the total population of the City of Jerusalem.

Since 1967, the residency status of 14,084 Palestinians had been revoked and rescinded by Israel, and those former residents were no longer permitted to live in the City. Some 78 per cent of Palestinians living in East Jerusalem lived below the poverty line. There was a chronic shortage of some 1,000 classrooms in East Jerusalem's education system. Palestinians were permitted to build on only 17 per cent of the area of East Jerusalem, most of which had already been totally exhausted by previous construction. A third of Palestinian land in East Jerusalem had been expropriated since 1967, and thousands of apartments for Israeli settlers had been built on it. Israel's building of the separation wall, the closing of passage points and the implementation of a strict "entry permit" regime had effectively cut off East Jerusalem from the West Bank, exacerbating the economic and social condition of its residents. Restrictions on entry from the West Bank, imposed both on patients and medical staff, had also led to a severe financial crisis in East Jerusalem hospitals, which provide the bulk of medical services for the entire West Bank. For 11 years now, Israel has also renewed the closure order of Palestinian institutions in East Jerusalem, including the Orient House and the Chamber of Commerce, in contradiction to Israel's road map obligations.

**Movement restrictions**

26. In July 2012, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recorded 59 permanently staffed checkpoints, 34 barrier checkpoints, 26 partially staffed checkpoints, 455 unstaffed obstacles, and 343 flying checkpoints. As of the end of June 2012, 60 Palestinian communities, with a combined population of about 190,000, were still compelled to use detours that were two to five times longer than the direct route to the closest city. As a result, their access to livelihoods and basic services, including health, education and water supply, continued to be impaired. Some 94 per cent of the Jordan Valley and Dead Sea area remained off-limits for Palestinian use owing to their designation as closed military areas and nature reserves, or their allocation to Israeli settlements.

27. Access to private agricultural land in the vicinity of Israeli settlements has remained significantly constrained owing to the fencing off of those areas or to settler violence. Palestinian farmers who own land close to 55 Israeli settlements have access only through "prior" coordination with the Israeli army, which has continued to undermine the agricultural livelihoods of farmers from some 90 Palestinian communities. Palestinian movement within the Israeli-controlled section of Hebron City remained subject to severe restrictions. The area is segregated from the rest of the city by more than 120 closure obstacles and Palestinian movement by car, and in some cases, by foot, continued to be banned along certain streets. As a result, those Palestinians still living in the area continue to suffer from poor access to basic services, including education.

**The wall**

28. Israel continued the illegal construction of the wall in the Occupied West Bank, including in and around Occupied East Jerusalem, in defiance of the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 9 July 2004. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in July 2012 that the wall's total length was approximately 708 km, more than twice the length of the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line) between the West Bank and Israel. Approximately 62.1 per cent of the wall has been completed, a further 8 per cent is under construction, and 29.9 per

cent is planned but not yet constructed. When completed, some 85 per cent of the route would run inside the West Bank, rather than along the Green Line, isolating some 9.4 per cent of the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory has, to date, collected over 26,000 claims for material damage caused by the construction of the wall.

29. Israeli restrictions also continued to isolate East Jerusalem and obstruct the access of the majority of the Palestinian population to the City and its holy sites, medical, education and social services, and markets. Palestinians with West Bank identification cards who are granted special permits can only enter East Jerusalem through 4 of the 14 wall checkpoints around the City. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, around 7,500 Palestinians who reside in areas between the Green Line and the wall (Seam Zone), excluding East Jerusalem, require special permits to continue living in their own homes. Another 23,000 will be isolated if the wall is completed as planned.

**Demolitions and displacements**

30. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Israel carried out the demolition of at least 589 Palestinian-owned structures, 184 of which were residences, during the reporting period (as at 2 October), displacing at least 879 people, including many children. Among structures demolished in Area C (under Israeli control with no official Palestinian Authority presence) in 2012 were 44 structures funded by international donors. In 2011, over 110 such structures were demolished by Israel. Since the beginning of 2011, 44 per cent of the demolished assistance structures were basic residential shelters (e.g. tents) provided to vulnerable families, while the majority of the other structures were intended to support livelihoods or improve access to basic services.

31. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, approximately 18 per cent of the West Bank has been designated by Israel, the occupying Power, as a closed military zone for training or a "firing zone". Approximately 5,000 Palestinians reside in those zones, in mostly Bedouin or herding communities, many of which existed prior to the closing of the areas. Two schools and one kindergarten located in firing zones currently have demolition orders against them. Some 45 per cent of demolitions of Palestinian-owned structures in Area C since 2010 have occurred in firing zones, displacing over 820 Palestinian civilians.

**Security**

32. Israeli occupying forces continued to conduct routine military raids and arrests throughout the West Bank. During the reporting period (as at 2 October), 5 Palestinians were killed and over 2,400 injured by Israeli forces in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, including during clashes with demonstrators. By August, Israeli forces arrested at least 2,500 Palestinians in some 3,500 search-and-arrest operations during the reporting period.

33. In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces killed at least 77 Palestinians and injured more than 300 during the reporting period (as at 2 October) in incidents involving air strikes and the enforcement of access restrictions near the border fence. Israeli restrictions on Palestinian access to land (up to 1,500 metres from the border fence)

and sea (beyond three nautical miles from the shore) continued to result in casualties and hinder the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinians in Gaza. The Israeli authorities reported in September 2012 that more than 455 rockets fired from Gaza had hit Israel since the beginning of the year. In total, one Israeli soldier and one civilian were killed and 21 other Israelis injured by Palestinian fire from Gaza during the reporting period.

**Gaza Strip**

34. According to a report released by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in August 2012, many Palestinians in the Gaza Strip are food insecure, owing primarily to a lack of economic means, rather than to a shortage of food: 44 per cent of the households are food insecure and 16 per cent are vulnerable to food insecurity, even when taking into account United Nations food distributions to almost 1.1 million persons. On average, households spend close to 50 per cent of their cash on food; 80 per cent of households receive some form of assistance, and 39 per cent of persons live below the poverty line. As long as the closure continues, levels of food insecurity will remain high. Restrictions on access to agricultural land and the fishing limit of three miles from the coast remain challenges. Palestinians in Gaza have no access, or gain access only with difficulty, to 17 per cent of the land, including 35 per cent of the agricultural land, because it is located in the "buffer zone" or in the high-risk, access-restricted area near the border fence with Israel. More than 3,000 fishermen do not have access to 85 per cent of the maritime areas agreed in the 1995 Oslo Accords. As a result, the fish catch has decreased dramatically over the years of closure. Overall, land and sea restrictions affect the livelihoods of at least 178,000 people, or 12 per cent of the population of Gaza, resulting in annual estimated losses of US$ 76.7 million from agricultural production and fishing. Reports indicate that if the three-mile limit on fishing were to be lifted, the fishing industry would likely grow in size. Further, in Gaza, the effect of the chronic multi-year electricity deficit has been significant, with prolonged power outages disrupting the delivery of basic services and undermining already vulnerable livelihoods and living conditions.

**Water**

35. According to a report issued by the Palestinian Water Authority in September 2012, Israel currently exploits 90 per cent of the shared water resources in the West Bank for exclusive Israeli use, including for use in settlements, and allocates less than 10 per cent for Palestinian use. Palestinian water consumption in the West Bank is limited to an average of just 70 litres per capita per day, below the "absolute minimum" of 100 litres per day recommended by the World Health Organization, and far below 300 litres per day in Israel.

36. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported in March 2012 that there were 56 water springs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory in the vicinity of Israeli settlements that had become the target of provocative settler actions, 30 of which had been taken over completely by settlers, while the other 26 were at risk of settler takeover. At least 84 per cent of the springs affected by settler activities were located on land recognized by Israel as privately owned by Palestinians. In three quarters of the springs taken over, Palestinians had been deterred from accessing the area by threatening or intimidating acts, while access to the rest had been prevented

by physical obstacles. In more than 70 per cent of the springs, Israeli settlers had begun to develop the surrounding area into a "tourist attraction".

### Women and children

37. According to the Palestinian Minister of Women's Affairs, Palestinian women comprise 49.2 per cent of the population. The illiteracy rate among women has decreased from 16 per cent in 2000 to 7.8 per cent in 2011. The proportion of women in the workforce is 14.7 per cent, compared to that of males, which is 69 per cent. Of the women in the workforce, 27 per cent are unemployed, while a further 20 per cent work for no remuneration. In the public sector, women represent 37 per cent of employees. There are six women ministers in the current Palestinian Authority Government, the highest number to date. Furthermore, women are occupying positions that were formerly reserved for men, such as governors, heads of municipalities and the President of the Central Authority for Palestinian Statistics and Public Prosecutor.

38. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Palestinian children living in the Gaza Strip, Area C of the West Bank and East Jerusalem face particularly serious challenges, including a substandard school infrastructure and a chronic shortage of classrooms, owing to building restrictions, and impeded access to educational facilities, owing to physical, bureaucratic and other obstacles. These factors often result in a high drop-out rate, low learning achievements and, in some cases, displacement. Military operations and settler violence have also continued to disrupt schooling: during the first six months of 2012, there were 16 documented incidents which resulted in damage to schools or interruption of education, and in some cases, in direct injury to children.

39. Save the Children and the East Jerusalem Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) stated in a March 2012 report that Palestinian children were subjected to Israeli violations of their rights on a daily basis, including killing, maiming, torture, arbitrary arrest and detention, home demolitions, discrimination, harassment and restrictions of movement. According to the report, 11 per cent of children under the age of 5 suffered from chronic malnutrition. Since the commencement of the second intifada in 2000, the Israeli occupying forces had arrested and detained over 8,000 Palestinian children, many of whom were as young as 12 years old. Those children were interrogated, arrested and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system. Cases of ill-treatment, torture and physical and verbal harassment during detention were frequently reported. Usually arrested at night, blindfolded and their hands bound, they were often forcibly taken, either to Israeli prisons or settlements within the West Bank for interrogations. The questioning almost always takes place without the child's lawyer or parents present. The way minors are treated by Israeli military forces and courts is in serious violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Moreover, detention usually affects their psychological well-being with long-lasting implications.

### Prisoners

40. In a prisoner exchange deal with Hamas, Israel released 477 Palestinian prisoners on 16 October 2011. In all, 205 prisoners were transferred to locations

other than their residence before their detention, in accordance with the exchange agreement. On 18 October, Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit, who had been held in Gaza since June 2006, was released by Hamas. On 18 December, 550 Palestinian prisoners, including 55 minors and 6 women, were released by Israel in the second phase of the exchange. A hunger strike was launched in early 2012 by more than 1,500 Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli custody to protest the deplorable and harsh conditions of captivity and Israel's application of administrative detention, by which it holds Palestinians without evidence, charge or trial. The crisis was resolved on 14 May, when Israel agreed to allow some 400 prisoners from Gaza to receive family visits for the first time since 2006, improve other conditions of detention and release administrative detainees once they completed their terms. Roughly 20 prisoners were also released from solitary confinement. According to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem, some 4,423 Palestinian security detainees and prisoners were held in Israeli prisons at the end of July 2012, among them 250 administrative detainees, 210 under the age of 18 and 7 women.

**Palestinian institution-building**

41. The International Monetary Fund reported in September 2012 that growth in the West Bank's gross domestic product (GDP) had declined to 5 per cent in 2011 and the first quarter of 2012, while unemployment had risen to 19 per cent in the first half of 2012, from 16 per cent in the same period of the previous year. The economic slowdown reflected continued fiscal retrenchment, combined with severe financing difficulties, declining donor aid, especially from regional donors, and slower easing of restrictions on movement and access. In Gaza, after a rebound in its real output by over 20 per cent on average in 2010-11 following the easing of tight restrictions, growth had declined to 6 per cent in the first quarter of 2012, and unemployment had risen to 30 per cent from 28 per cent in the same period in 2011.

42. The World Bank reported in September 2012 that the Palestinian Authority was facing a very serious fiscal situation with its budget deficit higher than expected, while external budget support had been falling. Debt to the local banking sector was almost at its limit and further credit from the private sector was unlikely to be forthcoming given the current high level of arrears. While the sustainability of growth in the Palestinian territories depended upon increasing private investment, restrictions put in place by the Government of Israel continued to stand in the way of potential private investment and remained the major impediment to sustainable economic growth. Most notably, the continued geographical fragmentation of Area C (envisaged under the Oslo Accords as a temporary arrangement) posed a binding constraint to real economic growth, essential to support the future Palestinian State. Area C's significance, as the only contiguous land in the West Bank connecting 227 separate geographical areas (A and B), was the key to economic cohesion and was the most resource-abundant space in the West Bank, holding the majority of the territory's water, agricultural lands, natural resources, and land reserves that provide an economic foundation for growth in key sectors of the economy.

**Reconciliation**

43. During a meeting in Doha on 5 February 2012, President Abbas and Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khaled Mashaal reached an agreement to form an interim government of "technocrats" to be headed by President Abbas and to be followed by the holding of presidential, parliamentary and local elections as agreed in May 2011.

However, to date, the agreement has not been implemented. The voter registration process that the Central Elections Commission had planned for Gaza from 3 to 14 July was suspended by the Hamas authorities. On 10 July, the Palestinian Authority, pending further developments on reconciliation, called for municipal elections to be held throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory on 20 October. Hamas has rejected that call. From 5 to 9 August, the Palestinian Central Elections Committee initiated a voter registry update in the West Bank, ahead of the planned local elections.

### United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

44. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) continued to provide extensive core services and emergency assistance to the Palestine refugees in all its fields of operations in Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The Government of Israel undertook some measures to ease the movement of goods into and out of the Gaza Strip, but those measures still fell well short of the level required to meet the needs of the Palestine refugee population and UNRWA's reconstruction requirements, or to ensure the revival of the economy which would reduce the dependency on UNRWA services. The Agency continues to experience a grave and recurrent financial crisis, which threatens its ability to sustain or improve its services and to continue emergency assistance programmes, including in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and for Palestine refugees in the Syrian Arab Republic, as well as its ability to complete essential projects, such as the reconstruction of the Nahr El Bared Camp in Lebanon. The Committee reiterates its appreciation for the dedication of UNRWA to its mission and calls upon all donors to increase contributions to ensure the well-being of more than 5 million registered Palestine refugees under the mandate of the Agency.

### United Nations Development Programme/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

45. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), through its Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People, continued to respond to the development needs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. In support of the Palestinian Authority's National Development Plan 2011-2013, UNDP proceeded with the implementation of its new consolidated plan, "Development for Freedom: Empowered Lives, a Resilient Nation 2011-2013". The three-year plan focuses on democratic governance and the rule of law, economic empowerment and private sector investment, environment and management of natural resources, as well as public and social infrastructure. In support of Palestinian Statehood, the UNDP plan places empowerment, resilience and sustainability at the centre of its efforts, with a focus on three priority areas: the Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem and Area C, where the needs are the greatest, owing to the lack of access by the Palestinian Authority.

46. The Committee also remained appreciative of the important work of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It noted that the consolidated appeal for 2012 focused on delivering humanitarian assistance, increased protection of civilians, enhanced monitoring and reporting on the humanitarian situation and the strengthening of United Nations humanitarian coordination structures.

# Chapter V
# Action taken by the Committee

## A. Action taken in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/14

47. In pursuance of its mandate, the Committee continued to mobilize the international community in support of the Palestinian people, in cooperation with United Nations bodies, Governments, intergovernmental and civil society organizations and others.

### 1. Action taken in the Security Council

48. During the reporting period, the Security Council has continued to monitor the situation on the ground and the efforts to implement the road map. It held monthly briefings throughout the year under the agenda item entitled "The situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian question".

49. During the open debates at the Council meetings held on 24 October 2011, 24 January, 23 April, and 25 July 2012, the Chair of the Committee delivered statements (see S/PV.6636, Resumption 1, S/PV.6706, Resumption 1, S/PV.6757, S/PV.6816).

### 2. Action taken by the Bureau of the Committee

50. On 13 October 2011, the Bureau of the Committee issued a statement on the situation of Palestinian political prisoners held by Israel (GA/PAL/1211). Further, on 24 February and 25 April 2012, the Bureau issued statements on Israel's illegal settlement activity in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem (GA/PAL/1224 and GA/PAL/1228).

## B. Action taken by the Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 66/14 and 66/15

### 1. Committee meetings at Headquarters

51. At its periodic meetings at Headquarters in New York, the Committee, among other things, heard presentations by representatives of UNRWA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Norwegian Refugee Council on the situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. On two separate occasions, the Committee was briefed on recent developments by Palestine Liberation Organization Executive Committee member Hanan Ashrawi and Palestinian negotiator Mohammad Shtayyeh, respectively. The Committee also organized a screening of a documentary film on the daily life of Palestinians in Hebron facing violence and harassment by Israeli settlers.

### 2. Programme of international meetings and conferences

52. Through its programme of international meetings and conferences, the Committee continued to raise international awareness of the various aspects of the question of Palestine and international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine.

53. In the period under review, the following international events were held under the auspices of the Committee in 2012:

(a) United Nations Seminar on Assistance to the Palestinian People, Cairo, 6 and 7 February, on the economic cost of the continued Israeli occupation;

(b) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, United Nations Office at Geneva, 3 and 4 April, on the question of Palestinian political prisoners;

(c) United Nations International Meeting on the Question of Palestine, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 30 and 31 May, on the role of youth and women in the peaceful resolution of the question of Palestine;

(d) United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, UNESCO headquarters, Paris, 1 June, on harnessing the power of youth and women;

(e) United Nations Asian and Pacific Meeting in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, Bangkok, 10 and 11 July, on international efforts at addressing the obstacles to the two-State solution.

54. The above-mentioned events were attended by representatives of Governments, Palestine, intergovernmental organizations and United Nations system entities, as well as parliamentarians and representatives of civil society and the media. Detailed information about these meetings is being issued as publications of the Division for Palestinian Rights and will be available on the "Question of Palestine" website maintained by the Division.

55. In connection with the above-mentioned events, the Committee delegation carried out the following activities: on the margins of the seminar in Cairo, the Committee delegation was received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt, Mohamed Kamel Amr, and by the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, Nabil Elaraby.

56. During its stay in Geneva, the Committee delegation held meetings with Swiss Government officials, including the Special Representative of Switzerland for the Middle East, Jean-Daniel Ruch, and with senior officials of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

57. On the sidelines of the meeting in Paris, the Committee delegation met with UNESCO Deputy Director-General Getachew Engida. On its way back to New York, the delegation stopped in Lisbon, where it met with representatives of parliamentary groups and civil society organizations.

58. In Bangkok, the Committee delegation met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand. On its way back to New York, the delegation also visited Hanoi to meet with Vietnamese officials.

### 3. Cooperation with intergovernmental organizations

59. Throughout the year, the Committee continued its cooperation with the African Union, the European Union, the League of Arab States, the Non-Aligned Movement

and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. The Committee is appreciative of the active participation of their representatives in the various international events held under its auspices.

## 4. Cooperation with civil society

### Civil society organizations

60. The Committee continued its cooperation with civil society organizations worldwide. Representatives of civil society participated in all meetings organized under the auspices of the Committee, including the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November 2011. The meetings provided civil society representatives with an opportunity to discuss the situation on the ground and their programmes in support of the Palestinian people and to improve coordination of their activities. The Committee was appreciative of the work done by civil society organizations and encouraged them to continue contributing to efforts aimed at realizing a two-State solution.

61. The Committee maintained and developed its liaison with national, regional and international coordinating mechanisms cooperating with it, in addition to its established liaison with a large number of individual organizations. At the United Nations Meeting of Civil Society in Support of Israeli-Palestinian Peace, held in Paris in June, the deliberations focused on ways in which civil society organizations could serve as a platform for empowering youths and women. While in Geneva, the Committee delegation held consultations with 12 representatives of civil society organizations from Europe, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel. The Committee delegation also held consultations in Bangkok with 15 civil society organizations from the Asian and Pacific region, the Occupied Palestinian Territory and Israel.

62. During the reporting period, three civil society organizations were accredited to the Committee.

63. The Division for Palestinian Rights maintained a page on civil society (http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/ngo.htm) on the "Question of Palestine" website as a tool for the exchange of information and networking and for cooperation between civil society and the Committee.

64. The Division maintained a Facebook page to disseminate information about the work of the Committee, and the United Nations as a whole, on the question of Palestine. In addition, the Division continued to publish the periodic online bulletin *NGO Action News*, in order to catalogue and publicize civil society initiatives.

### Parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations

65. The Committee continued to attach great importance to developing its liaison with national and regional parliaments and their organizations. Representatives of parliaments and inter-parliamentary organizations participated in international events organized by the Committee during 2012. Consultations with parliamentarians were also held in Lisbon and Hanoi.

### 5. Research, monitoring and publications

66. The Division carried out research and monitoring activities and responded to requests for information and briefings on the question of Palestine. Under the guidance of the Committee, which reiterated the relevance of the research, monitoring and publications programme, it also prepared the publications listed below for dissemination, including through the Internet:

(a) Monthly bulletin on action taken by the United Nations system and intergovernmental organizations relevant to the question of Palestine;

(b) Monthly chronology of events relating to the question of Palestine, based on media reports and other sources;

(c) Reports of international meetings and conferences organized under the auspices of the Committee;

(d) A special bulletin and information notes on the observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People;

(e) Periodic reviews of developments related to the Middle East peace process;

(f) Annual compilation of resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly and the Security Council relating to the question of Palestine.

### 6. United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine

67. Pursuant to successive annual General Assembly mandates, the Division for Palestinian Rights, in cooperation with relevant technical and library services of the United Nations Secretariat, continued to administer, maintain, expand and develop the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and the "Question of Palestine" website, which is located on the United Nations home page under "Peace and Security". That included the ongoing maintenance and upgrading of the technical components of the system to ensure the uninterrupted presence of UNISPAL (http://unispal.un.org) on the Internet and involved the expansion of the document collection to include relevant new and old United Nations system and related documents. In addition, steps continued to be taken to enhance the user-friendliness and usefulness of UNISPAL, including by creating a focus page on Palestine's application for United Nations membership and by incorporating additional multimedia content. RSS and Twitter feeds alerted users about newly posted materials.

### 7. Training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority

68. In accordance with the General Assembly mandate, the training programme conducted by the Division has been enhanced and involved seven staff members of the Palestinian Authority. Three staff members from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning and the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations participated in a newly established training programme at the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia in Beirut from 7 to 11 May during its 27th session. Two additional Palestinian Authority staff members of the Ministry of National Economy participated in a three-week training programme at the United Nations Office at Geneva during the Trade and Development Board session from 18 September to 5 October 2012, where they familiarized themselves with the work

of UNCTAD, including on trade facilitation and foreign direct investment. They also attended briefings on the work of other United Nations entities, including the Human Rights Council, the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization. In addition, two staff members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs are in the process of completing a three-month training programme at United Nations Headquarters in New York held from 12 September to 2 December, aimed at familiarizing themselves with various aspects of the work of the Secretariat and other United Nations organs and bodies, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

## 8. International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

69. The International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People was observed on 29 November 2011 at Headquarters in New York, and at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. On the occasion of the observance at Headquarters, in addition to a special meeting of the Committee and other activities, a cultural exhibit entitled "A Palestinian Vista" was organized under the auspices of the Committee, in cooperation with the Permanent Observer Mission of Palestine to the United Nations and the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat. The Committee noted with appreciation that the International Day of Solidarity had also been observed by United Nations information centres and other bodies in many cities throughout the world. Details on the observance are contained in the special bulletin issued by the Division.

# Chapter VI

## Action taken by the Department of Public Information in accordance with General Assembly resolution 66/16

70. The Department of Public Information, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/16, continued to implement its special information programme on the question of Palestine. In doing so, it strove to enhance dialogue and understanding, while sensitizing public opinion to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process.

71. The Department, in cooperation with the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, organized the 2012 International Media Seminar on Peace in the Middle East in Geneva on 12 and 13 June 2012. The seminar, which brought together journalists, bloggers, activists, film-makers, academics, policymakers and diplomats from Palestine, Israel, the wider Middle East region, Europe and the United States, as well as senior United Nations officials, examined the prospects for peace approaching the twentieth anniversary of the Oslo Accords; how the Arab Spring has affected media coverage of the question of Palestine; the role of women's activism and the media in Israeli-Palestinian peace and the wider region; civil society in media and film in the Middle East; and youth activism in the Middle East. The event, which had the largest number of female participants in its history, was promoted extensively across online platforms, including Tumblr and Twitter.

72. To mark the 2011 observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on 29 November, the Department produced a revised and updated permanent exhibit on the question of Palestine and the United Nations. The exhibit has been translated by United Nations information centres around the world into 11 languages. In addition, the information centres widely disseminated the Secretary-General's message on the occasion of the Day in official and local languages. Commemorative events, such as exhibits, film screenings and panel discussions, were organized in Brussels, Geneva, Harare, Manama, Moscow and Pretoria, among others.

73. The Department's annual training programme for Palestinian journalists was held at United Nations Headquarters from 31 October to 2 December 2011. Nine Palestinian journalists working mainly in broadcast media attended the programme, which included a visit to Washington, D.C. The programme's primary focus was strengthening the participants' capacity as broadcast media professionals.

74. During the reporting period, the Department also used all of its information outlets and products, including digital media platforms, to highlight the broad range of developments and issues related to the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process. The multilingual United Nations News Centre portal covered the issue extensively, with its English and French language versions alone carrying more than 200 related stories. The Arabic, Chinese, Russian and Spanish versions of the United Nations News Centre provided further coverage. The Department also produced 110 press releases on the question of Palestine in English and French, which included summaries of formal meetings and press conferences, as well as statements by the Secretary-General and other United Nations officials. United Nations Webcast provided live coverage of major discussions concerning the question of Palestine, including meetings of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

75. United Nations Radio, which is available in all the official languages, as well as in Kiswahili and Portuguese, provided regular coverage of issues and events pertaining to the question of Palestine, including news reports on the Palestinian Rights Committee and on the plight of Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip, and the ongoing work of UNRWA. United Nations Radio also highlighted the engagement by other United Nations entities, such as the Human Rights Council and UNESCO.

76. United Nations TV provided extensive coverage through its live broadcasts and feature programmes, which were distributed and broadcast via a variety of means and platforms, including United Nations Webcast, the United Nations audiovisual broadcasting services (UNifeed) satellite distribution system and United Nations programming on the Time Warner cable network. Related feature stories, such as the Secretary-General's visit to the region in February 2012, the UNESCO vote on Palestinian membership in October 2011, and the Gaza marathon in March 2012, were also produced and widely distributed.

77. During the reporting period, three other groups of visitors were briefed on the question of Palestine and the Middle East peace process (two high school groups, with a total of 65 students, and one college group, with a total of 22 students). In addition, the United Nations public inquiries team responded to 1,272 inquiries relating to the Middle East peace process.

# Chapter VII
## Conclusions and recommendations of the Committee

78. **Throughout the reporting period, the Committee continued to work for the realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination, and a negotiated settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in all its aspects, resulting in an end to the occupation and the independence of a sovereign, viable, contiguous and democratic Palestinian State based on 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital, and a just solution for the Palestine refugees based on General Assembly resolution 194 (III). It urged the international community to continue its support for the Middle East peace process, promoted international action against obstacles in its path, particularly the ongoing illegal Israeli settlement campaign, and engaged with diverse constituencies in support of peace, such as women and youth. It continued to mobilize international assistance to the Palestinians, while bringing to light the economic costs of the Israeli occupation which constrain Palestinian economic, social and institutional development. The Committee raised international alarm about the plight of the Palestinian prisoners and called for their release and an end to abusive practices by Israel, including administrative detentions.**

79. **The reporting period marked the one-year anniversary of the 23 September 2011 submission of the application for United Nations membership by Palestine, and the adoption by the Quartet of a timetable for the resumption of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, with a view to reaching an agreement by the end of 2012. The Committee is concerned that the positive momentum towards the two-State solution generated by these developments appears to have dissipated, while other crises have competed for international attention. The Committee remains convinced that a durable settlement of the conflict is a prerequisite for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. It is of the view that progress on the Palestinian status at the United Nations will generate a new dynamic in the peace process and help safeguard the two-State solution, as would the recognition of the State of Palestine by additional Member States. The Committee regrets that the series of "exploratory" meetings between the parties held in Amman in January 2012, and subsequent contacts, have not yet resulted in resumed negotiations. The main reason remains the continuation and expansion by Israel of its illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and its refusal to commit to the long-standing parameters of the peace process based on relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid terms of reference, including the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Quartet road map. The international community needs to maintain its focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, uphold its legal obligations in that regard, and present bold initiatives to break the current deadlock. The Committee shares the concern that any attempts to maintain the status quo will not only delay the two-State solution, but may also usher in a one-State reality with unpredictable consequences. The Committee calls upon the international community to take serious and concrete action which would compel Israel to stop its illegal settlement activities and to genuinely commit to ending its 45-year military occupation and to making peace. The dispatch of a fact-finding mission by the Human Rights Council is a welcome first step towards accountability. The**

**Committee joins in the calls upon the Security Council members to undertake a mission to the region to examine the situation first-hand and to uphold its duties under the Charter of the United Nations to contribute tangibly to the efforts to advance a just, lasting and comprehensive solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Arab-Israeli conflict as a whole and to the establishment of peace and security in the Middle East region.**

80. **The Committee has consistently supported the Palestinian State-building and reform agenda. It is concerned that its accomplishments are now endangered, owing to the debilitating financial crisis experienced by the Palestinian Authority, and it calls upon donors to meet their prior commitments and to provide emergency aid to buttress the two-State solution. Progress towards that goal also requires all Palestinian factions to unite behind the legitimate leadership of President Mahmoud Abbas. The Committee urges the speedy implementation, in good faith, of national reconciliation agreements.**

81. **The Committee remained deeply concerned about the ongoing violence and gross violations of humanitarian and human rights law. It reiterates its condemnation of all attacks against civilians, including rocket fire from Gaza, air strikes on populated areas, and settler violence and calls upon the Security Council and the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention to act urgently to guarantee the protection of civilians.**

82. **As the Gaza blockade reached its five-year mark, the Committee was greatly alarmed by the conclusions of a recent United Nations study that the damage to its economy, infrastructure and resources is becoming irreversible, thus threatening Gaza's future viability. The Committee remains convinced that any sustainable recovery would require a complete lifting of the blockade by Israel. It would also require the dismantlement of the Israeli occupation and its associated regime of settlements, checkpoints, the separation wall, demolitions, land confiscations and expulsions, which have been on the rise, with the worst abuses occurring in East Jerusalem and in Area C. The Committee calls in this regard for the transfer of additional territories in Area C to the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority, as envisaged in the Oslo Accords.**

83. **The Committee and the Division for Palestinian Rights will continue through their mandated activities to generate heightened international awareness of the question of Palestine, as well as international support for the rights of the Palestinian people and the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In this connection, the Committee emphasizes the useful and constructive contribution of the Division in support of its mandate aimed at enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights. It notes with satisfaction: (a) the sustained level of dialogue, engagement and support on the part of the international community for the programme's objectives, as evidenced by the number of adopted resolutions, international meetings and conferences, and commemorations of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People; (b) the continued involvement of civil society organizations in support of the efforts of the Committee and the United Nations towards a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the number of civil society conferences, public forums, meetings and consultations between the Committee and civil society**

**organizations; and (c) an increase in international awareness of the United Nations policies and activities on the question of Palestine, as evidenced by the increased access to the United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine (UNISPAL) and other information materials on the Question of Palestine website. The Committee also considers that the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority carried out by the Division has proved its usefulness, as it directly contributes to Palestinian capacity-building efforts. The Committee strongly recommends that that important mandated activity be continued and, where possible, further enhanced.**

84. **The Committee will focus its programme of international meetings and conferences in 2013, implemented by the Division, on widening international support for the achievement of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, national independence and sovereignty, and to return to their homes and property. The programme will also focus on strengthening international support for the permanent status negotiations and contributing to the creation of a favourable international atmosphere for their conduct in good faith. The Committee intends to mobilize increased international scrutiny of the developments on the ground, in particular the halting of all settlement activities in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and an end to all other illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. It will support global campaigns to challenge Israeli impunity and promote the concept of Israeli accountability for its actions towards the Palestinian people.**

85. **The Committee will continue to pay special attention to highlighting the plight of the most disadvantaged Palestinians, such as refugees, those living in Gaza and political prisoners. The Committee will continue to mobilize support for Palestinian institution-building and all other efforts to facilitate the viability of the Palestinian State. It will reach out to and engage Governments, parliamentarians and civil society to mobilize support for a just solution to all permanent status issues. The Committee wishes to contribute to efforts towards ending incitement on both sides, provide a venue to have the narratives heard and reconciled and, with the help of civil society, to promote peace education. It will pay particular attention to the inclusion and empowerment of women and youth and their organizations in this process. The Committee also wishes to work towards Palestinian reconciliation and will strive to involve Palestinians from different ends of the political spectrum in its events.**

86. **The Committee highly values civil society initiatives in support of the Palestinian people and welcomes the growing calls from civil society groups for peaceful protests against the status quo. It lauds the courageous advocacy actions of countless activists, including eminent personalities and parliamentarians, who participate in demonstrations against the wall, try to break the siege of Gaza and keep their home constituencies informed about the harsh realities of life under occupation. The Committee also recognizes the sacrifices made by Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails who have risked their lives to help to bring an end to illegal Israeli policies, including that of administrative detention. The Committee encourages civil society partners to work with their national Governments, parliamentarians and other institutions, with a view to gaining their full support for the work of the United Nations, including that of the Committee, on the question of Palestine. It will continue to assess its programme of cooperation with civil society and consult them on ways**

**to enhance their contribution. The Committee appreciates the support it receives from the Secretariat in strengthening cooperation with civil society.**

87. **The Committee looks forward to further developing its cooperation with parliamentarians and their umbrella organizations. Parliamentarians have a special responsibility to ensure that their Governments actively promote and support the realization of the two-State solution and ensure respect for international law, in accordance with their international obligations.**

88. **The Committee requests the Division to continue its substantive and secretariat support, the programme of research, monitoring and publications and other informational activities. It should pay special attention to continued development of the "Question of Palestine" portal and use of web-based social information networks, such as Facebook and Twitter. It should also continue to develop the UNISPAL document collection by reflecting the issue of the hour and enhancing subject-based search capability, as well as by continuing to digitize and upload historic documents and to develop user-friendly search features, such as the French titles project. The Division should continue to collaborate with the United Nations Libraries at Headquarters and at Geneva in the search for historic documents. It should further develop the annual training programme for staff of the Palestinian Authority, paying special attention to the programme's gender balance and reviewing logistics to allow the maximum number of participants possible. It should continue to organize the annual observance of the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.**

89. **The Committee is of the view that the special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information has made an important contribution to informing the media and public opinion of the relevant issues. It requests the continuation of the programme, with the necessary flexibility warranted by developments relevant to the question of Palestine.**

90. **Wishing to make its contribution to the achievement of a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement of the question of Palestine, and in view of the many difficulties facing the Palestinian people and besetting the peace process, the Committee calls upon all States to join it in this endeavour and to extend their cooperation and support to the Committee, and invites the General Assembly again to recognize the importance of its role and to reconfirm its mandate.**

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